

113TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1827

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the American Fighter Aces, collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service and defense of our country's freedom throughout the history of aviation warfare.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 15, 2013

Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. INHOFE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the American Fighter Aces, collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service and defense of our country's freedom throughout the history of aviation warfare.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “American Fighter Aces  
5 Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) An American Fighter Ace is a fighter pilot  
2 who has served honorably in a United States mili-  
3 tary service and who has destroyed 5 or more con-  
4 firmed enemy aircraft in aerial combat during a war  
5 or conflict in which American armed forces have  
6 participated.

7           (2) Beginning with World War I, and the first  
8 use of airplanes in warfare, military services have  
9 maintained official records of individual aerial vic-  
10 tory credits during every major conflict. Of more  
11 than 60,000 United States military fighter pilots  
12 that have taken to the air, less than 1,500 have be-  
13 come Fighter Aces.

14           (3) Americans became Fighter Aces in the  
15 Spanish Civil War, Sino-Japanese War, Russian  
16 Civil War, Arab-Israeli War, and others. Addition-  
17 ally, American military groups' recruited United  
18 States military pilots to form the American Volun-  
19 teer Group, Eagle Squadron, and others that pro-  
20 duced American-born Fighter Aces fighting against  
21 axis powers prior to Pearl Harbor.

22           (4) The concept of a Fighter Ace is that they  
23 fought for freedom and democracy across the globe,  
24 flying in the face of the enemy to defend freedom  
25 throughout the history of aerial combat. American-

1       born citizens became Fighter Aces flying under the  
2       flag of United States allied countries and became  
3       some of the highest scoring Fighter Aces of their re-  
4       spective wars.

5           (5) American Fighter Aces hail from every  
6       State in the Union, representing numerous ethnic,  
7       religious, and cultural backgrounds.

8           (6) Fighter Aces possess unique skills that have  
9       made them successful in aerial combat. These in-  
10      clude courage, judgment, keen marksmanship, con-  
11      centration, drive, persistence, and split-second think-  
12      ing that makes an Ace a war fighter with unique  
13      and valuable flight driven skills.

14          (7) The Aces' training, bravery, skills, sacrifice,  
15      attention to duty, and innovative spirit illustrate the  
16      most celebrated traits of the United States military,  
17      including service to country and the protection of  
18      freedom and democracy.

19          (8) American Fighter Aces have led distin-  
20      guished careers in the military, education, private  
21      enterprise, and politics. Many have held the rank of  
22      General or Admiral and played leadership roles in  
23      multiple war efforts from WWI to Vietnam through  
24      many decades. In some cases they became the high-  
25      est ranking officers for following wars.

1           (9) The extraordinary heroism of the American  
2 Fighter Ace boosted American morale at home and  
3 encouraged many men and women to enlist to fight  
4 for America and democracy across the globe.

5           (10) Fighter Aces were among America's most-  
6 prized military fighters during wars. When they ro-  
7 tated back to the United States after combat tours,  
8 they trained cadets in fighter pilot tactics that they  
9 had learned over enemy skies. The teaching of com-  
10 bat dogfighting to young aviators strengthened our  
11 fighter pilots to become more successful in the skies.  
12 The net effect of this was to shorten wars and save  
13 the lives of young Americans.

14           (11) Following military service, many Fighter  
15 Aces became test pilots due to their superior flying  
16 skills and quick thinking abilities.

17           (12) The American Fighter Aces are one of the  
18 most decorated military groups in American history.  
19 Twenty-two Fighter Aces have achieved the rank of  
20 Admiral in the Navy. Seventy-nine Fighter Aces  
21 have achieved the rank of General in the Army, Ma-  
22 rines, and Air Force. Nineteen Medals of Honor  
23 have been awarded to individual Fighter Aces.

1 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of  
3 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-  
4 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements  
5 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold  
6 medal of appropriate design to the American Fighter Aces,  
7 collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service  
8 and defense of our country’s freedom, which has spanned  
9 the history of aviation warfare.

10 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the  
11 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the  
12 Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall  
13 strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and  
14 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

15 (c) AWARD OF MEDAL.—Following the award of the  
16 gold medal in honor of the American Fighter Aces under  
17 subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smith-  
18 sonian Institution, where it shall be available for display  
19 or temporary loan to be displayed elsewhere, particularly  
20 at appropriate locations associated with the American  
21 Fighter Aces, and that preference should be given to loca-  
22 tions affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution.

23 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

24 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
25 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3, at  
26 a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medal, including

1 labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead ex-  
2 penses, and amounts received from the sale of such dupli-  
3 cates shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public  
4 Enterprise Fund.

5 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

6 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck under  
7 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51  
8 of title 31, United States Code.

9 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections  
10 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals  
11 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic  
12 items.

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